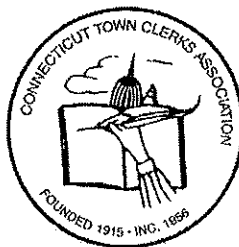


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Testimony of
Connecticut Town Clerks Association
Betsy Moukawsher, Member of the Legislative Committee (Groton Town Clerk)
Veterans' Affairs Committee
Tuesday, February 23, 2016

HB 5357, An Act Concerning Marriage Licenses for Active Duty Military Personnel

Good day Senator Flexer, Representative Hennessy, Senator Martin, Representative Yaccarino and the distinguished members of the Veterans' Affairs Committee. My name is Betsy Moukawsher and I am the Town Clerk and the Registrar of Vital Statistics in the Town of Groton and a member of the Legislative Committee of the Connecticut Town Clerks Association. I am submitting testimony on House Bill 5357, *An Act Concerning Marriage Licenses for Active Duty Military*. The Connecticut Town Clerks Association has concerns with this amendment and the ability to ensure the integrity of the marriage license process that it may create.

The intent of the bill seems to be to alleviate an implied burden on active duty military to appear in person to apply for a marriage license. Currently any applicant for a marriage license is required to appear in person in order for the Town Clerk to do the following:

- Verify that they are who they say they are
- Verify that the applicant is of legal age to be married
- Verify that the applicant is not under a conservatorship, and if so, assure that appropriate consents are in place.
- Review the marriage laws of the State and administer an oath that the information contained on the certificate is true and accurate and that they are legally authorized by Connecticut law to be married
- Verify that the applicant wishes to get married.

We believe current marriage laws protect all citizens from marriage fraud and we are concerned that this amendment could create a loophole for fraud that does not presently exist.

Lastly, the Town Clerks Association would like the legislature to recognize that the Town Clerk's offices have a history of accommodating special circumstances regardless of a person's occupation. We wish to make sure the integrity of the process is not compromised.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit this testimony. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or concerns.